

Application No.: 09/835046

Docket No.: SCW-003RCE

REMARKSClaim Rejection Pursuant to 35 U.S.C §101

Applicants have amended claim 20 to affirmatively recite a "computer-readable medium."

Claim Rejection Pursuant to 35 U.S.C §103(a)

Claims 1, 3-14, 16-17 and 19-20 were rejected by the Examiner in the Office Action of August 12, 2003 as being unpatentable for obviousness over Cannon et al (U.S. Patent No. 6, 678, 824, hereafter "Cannon") in view of Lorvin et al (United States Patent No. 5, 907, 831, hereafter "Lorvin"). For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Summary of Claimed Invention

The claimed invention provides a mechanism for the granting of professional continuing education credits in exchange for review of educational content without resorting to conventional testing requirements. Educational data is segmented into educational units forming substantially complete content and is presented as a series of self-contained topics to a user. The user must log in to begin review and log out upon completion. The time period between login and logout is recorded. A minimum and maximum time parameter in which a user is to review the content in exchange for continuing educational credits is provided. The parameters combined with the smaller topics to require the user to actually be present at a remote terminal in order to compile substantial continuing educational credits. The minimum time parameter prevents a user from logging in and then immediately logging out in order to gain credit. The maximum time parameter prevents a user from logging in and wandering off to do something else when the user is supposed to be reviewing the content since exceeding the time parameter disqualifies the user from gaining continuing education credits. Conventionally a test from the continuing education authority or on its behalf had been required in order to ensure review of the material. The present invention avoids the need for a test on the educational content by requiring applicants review the data in smaller segments that satisfy the time parameters.

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Summary of Cannon et al

Cannon discusses an application usage time limiter that monitors pre-configured applications. The usage time limiter runs as a front-end for the programs selected for monitoring or else runs as a separate program interacting with the operating system to limit the usage of specified programs. The invention in Cannon is directed towards allocating time for a user so that in order to execute a specified program, the user must first spend a specified amount of time operating a second program. Cannon discusses the situation where the amount of time a user is permitted to play computer games is limited by the amount of time the user has spent using educational programs. Cannon further discusses the situation where a user is given a credit enabling the user to play a non-beneficial program in exchange for spending a certain minimum amount of time executing an educational program.

Summary of Lotvin et al

Lotvin discusses an educational system whereby parents arrange with third party providers to provide children with access to educational and cultural information. The educational and cultural data is presented to the child who reviews and responds to the data. Upon completion of the review of the data, the child is rewarded with points from the third party provider. The points are funded by the parents through payments to the third party provider and may be redeemed to purchase a variety of items. There is no minimum time parameter associated with the review of data. In all cases, the points/rewards are funded by entities (parents/companies, etc.) associated with the user (child/employee, etc) reviewing the content. No mention is made of granting professional continuing education credit in exchange for the content review.

Argument

The combination of Cannon in view of Lotvin fails to disclose all of the elements of Applicants independent claims as amended.

The independent claims 1, 7, 14 and 20 have been amended to explicitly include the limitation that a professional accrediting authority requires the review of the educational content by the user prior to the professional accrediting authority certifying the compliance of the user

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with a professional continuing education requirement. The independent claims have also been amended to indicate that the professional accrediting authority is certifying the compliance of the user with a professional continuing education requirement. The claimed invention is directed towards solving the problem of ensuring the material participation of the user in satisfying professional continuing education requirements by reviewing required content over a network. It is respectfully suggested that the combination of a professional accrediting authority, a professional continuing education requirement, the use of a minimum and maximum time parameter for viewing the required content that need to be satisfied prior to the certification by the professional accrediting authority that the user has satisfied the requirement, and the certification without the performance of an examination by the professional accrediting authority represent a novel and non-obvious combination of elements.

Neither Cannon nor Lotvin is directed towards verifying the material participation of professionals in satisfying continuing education requirements over a network without resorting to an examination. The combination of elements is neither taught nor suggested by the Examiner-cited references. Neither Cannon nor Lotvin disclose a professional accrediting authority, or the certification of compliance with a professional continuing education requirement without an examination based on adherence to minimum and maximum time parameters when reviewing the required content.

Since the combination of references fails to include all of the elements of independent claims 1, 7, 14 and 20, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections and the allowance of claims 1, 3-14, 16-17 and 19-20.

Claim 18 was rejected by the Examiner as being unpatentable for obviousness over Cannon in view of Lotvin in further view of Sonnenfeld (United States Patent No. 6,112,049, hereafter "Sonnenfeld"). Sonnenfeld was cited by the Examiner as teaching the use of hyperlinks with educational content. Sonnenfeld does not however, teach or suggest the conferral of continuing education credit conferred by a professional accrediting authority subject to the limitations discussed above as required by the underlying independent claim 14. Since, as noted above, neither Cannon nor Lotvin includes the required elements either, Applicants

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request the rejection directed to claim 18 be withdrawn and respectfully suggests that claim 18 is now in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicants believe no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. SCW-003RCE from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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